Stilettoheelsteam.net
"Chonmage-style"

Futagashira

by Natsume ONO

Volume 1, Chapter 4

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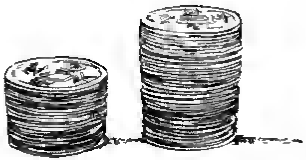
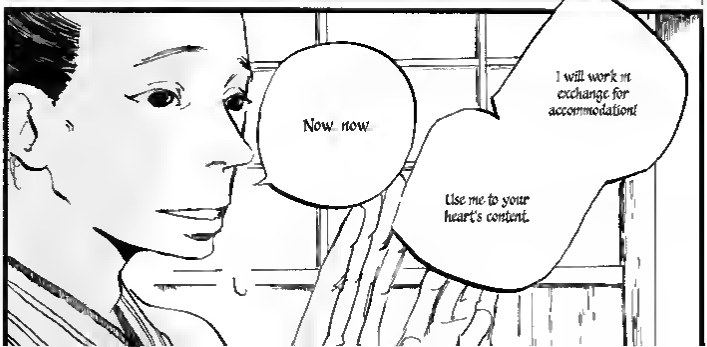
Chapter 4



This is all I have!


Now, now.
I will work in exchange for accommodation!
Use me to your heart's content.

Err...
...The man who accompanied you said I could use you to heat the baths
and then left after paying for his own boarding fees...
He's that sort of fellow...
Well, then...
I'll do anything even if I need to heat the baths!

2

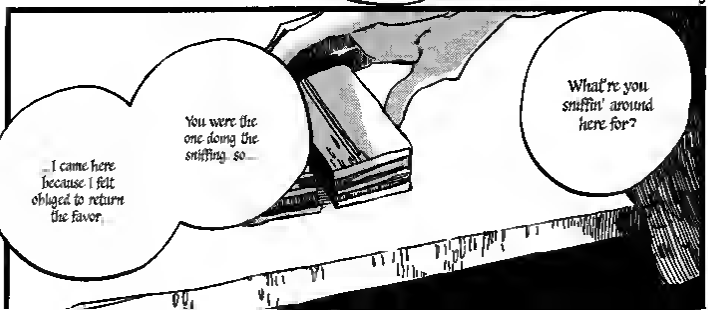
I love playing shogi.
Please accompany me.

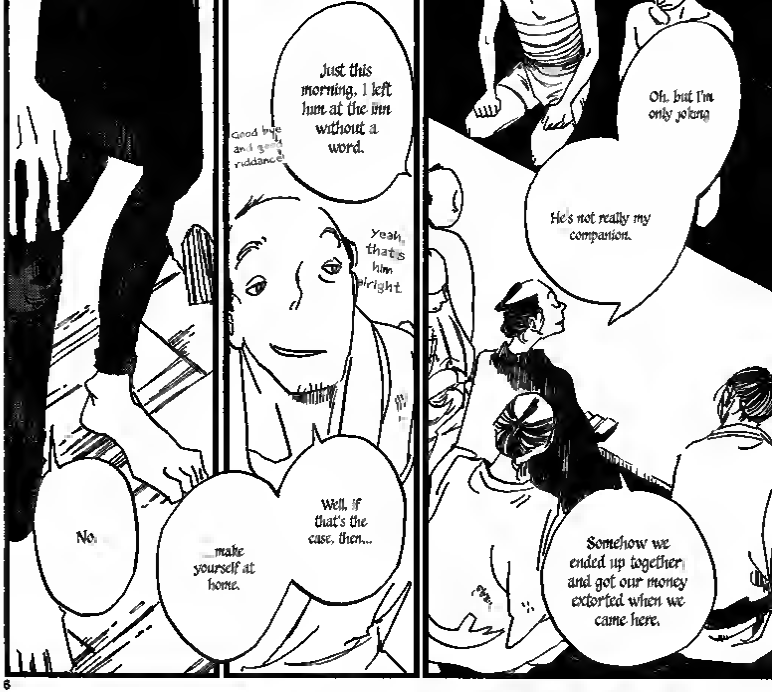
3

4
Clever, how they maneuver you into a cycle of wins and losses, so you can't pull out...
luring you until they clean out your pockets.
I can see why that Benzo is so easily hooked.
Even the farmers join in...

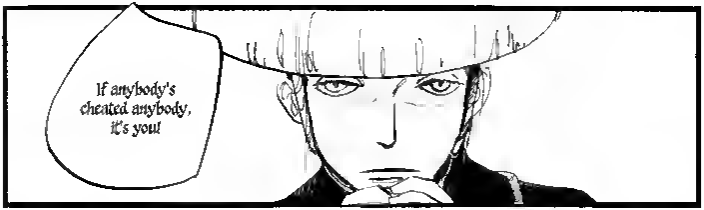
Even.
agh!
Brother.
Good set of eyes you got there.

You're "Brother" Benzo's companion, right?


What're you sniffin' around here for?
You were the one doing the sniffing, so—
...I came here because I felt obliged to return the favor.


Oh, but I'm only joking.
He's not really my companion.
Somehow we ended up together, and got our money extorted when we came here.
Just this morning, I left him at the inn without a word.
Good bye and good riddance.
Yeah, that's him alright.
Well, if that's the case, then...
...make yourself at home.
No.

Getting back the amount snatched from me is plenty.
I'll take my leave.


If anybody's cheated anybody, it's you!

You roll the dice, you pay the price.
You're up to all sorts of trickery!
Who sold his little sister to pay off his debts, eh?
I didn't sell her!
Day after day! I've had it with you!
Pow!

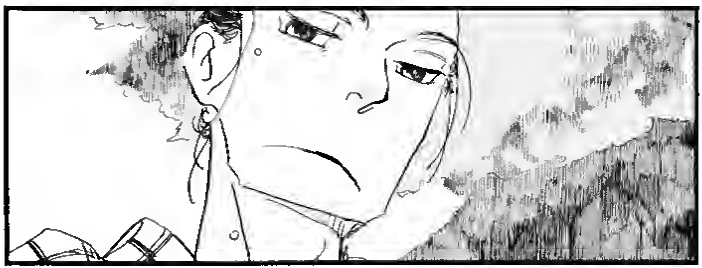
You said you'd put her to work.
I didn't sell her.
I didn't sell her...

Show your face.

You tricked me!
You bastards sold her to a brothel!
Give me back my little sister...

Heating the baths would have been easier...
He wasn't lying...
Second round.
Hmmm, hi!
I need to get some fresh air.
.....
Snap

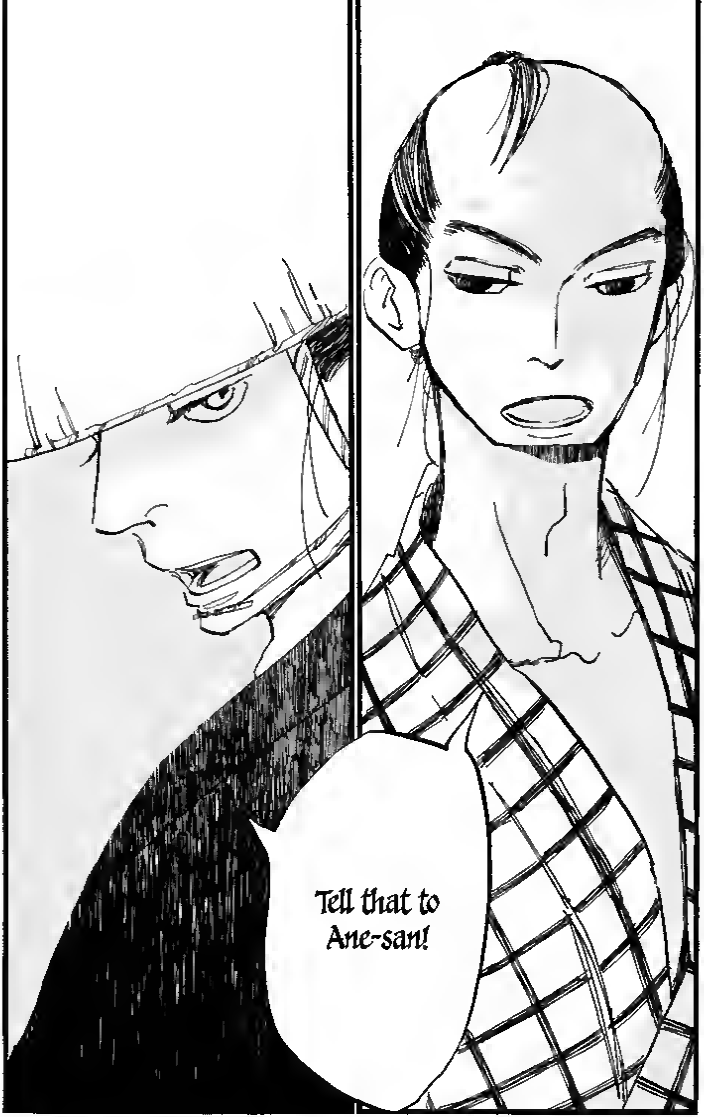
Master, that man is running away
We're at a good place right now. I'm sure he'll return.
DASH
!
Thud!!



When did I become aware of you?
Since the beginning

11

I told ya, we're meant for bigger..
...things!
Heavens!
Sending out guards for...
...small fry like us, eh?
Benzo and I, both.


Tell that to Ane-san!

You've returned.
Ah!
Yawn!
SNAP
What? You didn't use him to heat the baths?
Be quiet!
He made me play shogi with him from the start
Did you go to the gambling den?
Well
You have this strange smell.

What about that temple?
I've heard many stories of it being used as a gambling saloon and and then getting a cut of the earnings
The chief priest there is in on it and doing very bad things.
You could even call him the manager!
That gambling den is a thorn in all the innkeepers' sides
Don't come near us!
Yeah, you stink! You stink!
You're always smelly yourself!
They're squeezing out all the money from travelers.
Of course, we usually don't have very many guests, but the numbers keep on dwindling.

Those followers under him behave no better than thieves
It's all very sinful.

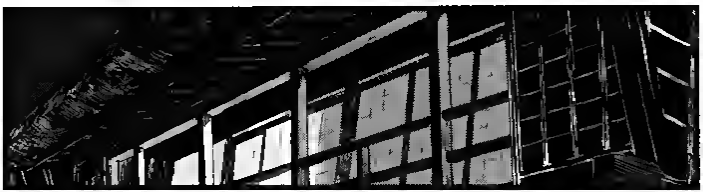
Their young men are being enticed to these places
It's not just we innkeepers, but even the nearby farm village suffers too

Some of these swindled farmers get their rice confiscated,
while others are told to put women in their household to service,
and I've heard that these women are then sold into brothels.

It's one thing to blame a man for his addiction to gambling but what they're doing is despicable.
The magistrate's office is shorthanded, so they shut their eyes, while these men become increasingly unruly, assaulting the village women.
A completely worthless bunch!

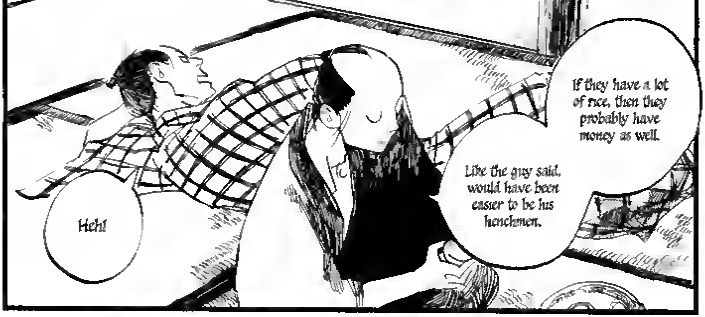
SWAP
15
Hachi,
could you prepare the water?
Yes! Right away!
Please go up to take your bath.
How would you like to stay one more night?
Some good fish just came in.
Bath
Bath
Courtesy of the house.
I can pay for myself.
For me too! Me too!
Clink
Clink
GRIN
As long as you play a round with me.

Thank you for accompanying me today
The pleasure is all mine!
Now then, it's your turn.
Heh heh.
I have a meeting to attend, so I must take my leave.

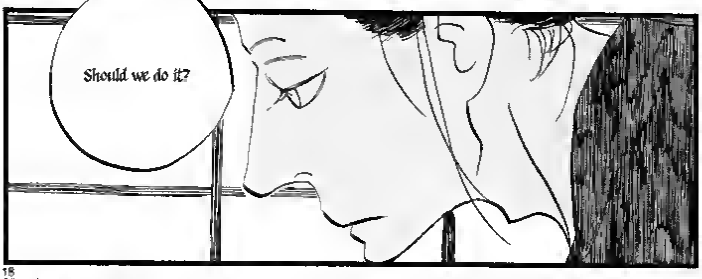


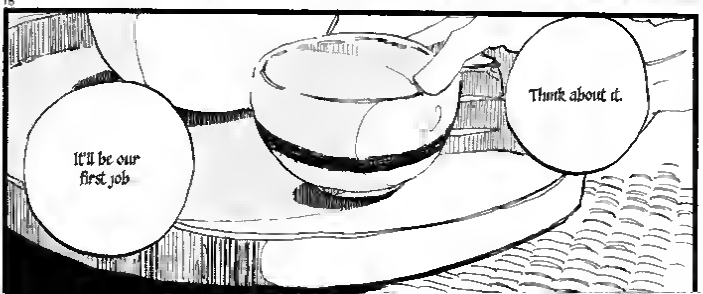
17

So he hates the chief, eh...?
No wonder that bastard was acting all tough.


Heh!
Like the guy said, would have been easier to be his henchmen.
If they have a lot of rice, then they probably have money as well.

Hey.


Should we do it?


Think about it.
It'll be our first job

Security will be tight though?

I knew you were investigating there for that purpose.
While it may be a revolting task...
Well, if we want to keep traveling, we'll need to make money.
The money they owe you,
with added interest.

I'll make sure you get it back.

Slide!

I bet the vault's in the Chief Priest's living room.
Whoever's guarding it might be slacking his duties
A rogue whose too comfortable will only take a brief look.

Don't botch things up, Souji.
Same could be said to you,
Benzo.
EVERYONE, LET'S GOOOO!
!

BASTARDS! WE'LL DRIVE YOU OUT OF OUR VILLAGE!
ROOOOAAAAAR
What!